



Conversation Guide: Personal Values and the LGBTQIA+ Community

Living Room Conversations offers a simple, sociable and structured way to practice communicating across differences while building understanding and relationships. Typically, 4-7 people meet in person or by video call for about 90 minutes to listen to and be heard by others on one of our nearly 100 topics. Rather than debating or convincing others, we take turns talking to share and learn, and be curious. No preparation is required, though background links with balanced views are available on some topic pages online. *Anyone can host using these italicized instructions. Hosts also participate.*

Introductions: Why We're Here (~10 minutes)

Each participant has 1 minute to introduce themselves.

- Share your name, where you live, what drew you here, and if this is your first conversation.

Conversation Agreements: How We'll Engage (~5 minutes)

These will set the tone of our conversation; participants may volunteer to take turns reading them aloud.

- **Be curious and listen to understand.** Conversation is as much about listening as it is about talking. You might enjoy exploring how others' experiences have shaped their values and perspectives.
- **Show respect and suspend judgment.** People tend to judge one another. Setting judgement aside opens you up to learning from others and makes them feel respected and appreciated. Try to truly listen, without interruption or crosstalk.
- **Note any common ground as well as any differences.** Look for areas of agreement or shared values that may arise and take an interest in the differing beliefs and opinions of others.
- **Be authentic and welcome that from others.** Share what's important to you. Speak from your experience. Be considerate of others who are doing the same.
- **Be purposeful and to the point.** Do your best to keep your comments concise and relevant to the question you are answering. Be conscious of sharing airtime with other participants.
- **Own and guide the conversation.** Take responsibility for the quality of your participation and the conversation as a whole. Be proactive in getting yourself and others back on track if needed. Use an agreed upon signal like the "time out" sign if you feel the agreements are not being honored.



Question Rounds: What We'll Talk About

Optional: a participant can keep track of time and gently let people know when their time has elapsed.

Round One: Getting to Know Each Other (~10 min)

Each participant can take 1-2 minutes to answer one of these questions:

- What are your hopes and concerns for your family, community and/or the country?
- What would your best friend say about who you are?
- What sense of purpose / mission / duty guides you in your life?

Round Two: Exploring the Topic –Personal Values and the LGBTQ+ Community (~40 min)

One participant can volunteer to read this paragraph.

Views and conversations around homosexuality and gender can be charged and particularly challenging within the context of our cultural values. At our best, we are able to see each other as fellow members of the family of a community. At our worst, we perceive in each other a threat to our identity, core beliefs, and values. Conversations are often plagued by fear, tension, and disagreement. This is not a casual conversation, there is a lot on the line- LGBTQ+ (lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and queer) folks make up one of the highest at-risk populations in our communities. How can we engage in better conversations in order to hold space for different lived experiences, care for, and better understand each other? Thinking of the Conversation Agreements, how will you listen and be curious? Show respect and suspend judgment? Be authentic and welcome that from others?

Take ~2 minutes each to answer a question below without interruption or crosstalk. After everyone has answered, the group may take a few minutes for clarifying or follow up questions/responses. Continue exploring additional questions as time allows.

- How do we maintain dignity in our relationship and connection to each other as we encounter varying beliefs and opinions around the intersection of faith, values, sexuality, and gender identity? How can we resist the temptation to "otherize" and judge each other?
- Where has your understanding of the LGBTQ+ community come from? How has it shifted over time for you?
- How certain do you feel about what to believe about sexuality/gender identity? Do you ever have doubts if you've arrived at the "right" conclusions? How free do you feel to voice any doubts you do have?
- What's missing from the current conversation on this question? In your experience, what has shut down this conversation?
- What is your greatest fear in having this conversation? What is your greatest hope?

- What do you hope for from those with whom you disagree around these issues? What do you wish they knew about you and your views?

Round Three: Reflecting on the Conversation (~15 min)

Take 2 minutes to answer one of the following questions:

- What was most meaningful / valuable to you in this Living Room Conversation?
- What learning, new understanding or common ground was found on the topic?
- How has this conversation changed your perception of anyone in this group, including yourself?
- Is there a next step you would like to take based upon the conversation you just had?

Closing (~5 min)

- Give us feedback! Use livingroomconversations.org/feedback-form/ or QR code
- Donate! Make more of these possible; give at livingroomconversations.org/donate/
- Join or host more conversations! With a) this group by exchanging your emails; b) others in person and/or by video call online. Get more involved or learn how to host at livingroomconversations.org/get-involved/

Thank you!

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